

Most readers will, however, go straight to the text and the excellent series of maps and photographs. The greater part of the text, being an analysis of the metric and morphological data, inevitably includes some pages consisting mainly of rather dull strings of percentages, but anyone who has tried to put into words the results of quantitative observations knows how very difficult it is to avoid such a style. Large parts are, however, much more readable and even exciting—the account of how the work was carried out, and still more, the correlation of the results with archæological, legendary, historical and linguistic data.

The photographs are good and well reproduced. They are of interest as character studies and must clearly be full of information for the practised morphologist.

To others, however, less intimately familiar with the minute variations of the human form, and indeed to the reviewer, the maps will have a stronger appeal, as conveying to the eye a large amount of information in an efficient and acceptable manner. Basic physical observations are represented in twenty-three maps. It is noteworthy that in Eire there is for nearly every character an east-west gradient, but almost invariably a sharp break near the middle of the country, usually along the western borders of Counties Waterford and Tipperary and the line of the River Shannon. Similar features are seen in the maps of the results of the blood group survey, not only for the ABO groups but also for the Rh groups, Rh-negatives being more frequent in the east than in the west. This is the first time that a uniformly planned and executed blood-group survey of a European country has revealed a significant heterogeneity in the distribution of the Rh groups. Of the physical characters, those which (on a population basis) most commonly accompany Rh-negativeness appear to be a high facial index and a relatively low head circumference.

While the B blood group gene appears to have a random distribution the frequency of the O gene is markedly higher in the west than the east, reaching some of the highest frequencies known in Europe. Conversely, A

is higher in the east. There is a rather marked resemblance between the distributions of the A gene and of a relatively low mean cephalic index. The correlations between individual blood group genes and physical characters may well be accidental but both classes of character agree in showing a marked dichotomy of the population. Northern Ireland, however, goes with the east for some characters and with the west for others.

The population has been classified on combined physical characters into a number of more or less arbitrary morphological types. The distribution maps of these, important as they may be in tracing the origin of various elements in the population, do not give anything like such clear pictures as do the unit physical characters.

*The Physical Anthropology of Ireland* contains the results of an outstanding piece of anthropometric research. It ought to find a place in every anthropological department and laboratory for reference purposes; and considerable parts of it supply fascinating material for less systematic reading and perusal.

A. E. MOURANT.

## EUGENICS

**La Rue, Daniel Wolford.** *Let's Have a Better World: A Program for Progress and Survival.* New York, 1955. Exposition Press. Pp. 240. Price \$4.00.

THIS book is a plea for a practical and positive eugenics policy. Dr. La Rue uses a warm American idiom and writes with optimistic bounce. He is never in two minds, and it is very much part of his message that of two road bifurcating from where we stand the one leads to the deuce. The other could take us via M. Dachert's Eugenical Garden City at Strasbourg to that "Better World."

The heart of the matter is Chapter XIII—"Quality Folks in the Right Quantity." "The essentials of human superiority," says

Dr. La Rue, "are the same as those found in the make-up of a good dog. . . . They are excellent disposition, high intelligence, and fine physique." Let us see what he means by "disposition." He defines it as "our propensity profile, a propensity being any such feeling-capacity as fear, anger, curiosity, elation (self-assertion), or parental love, tender feeling." These propensities "can be measured." Thereupon Dr. La Rue reduces the human race not to eight types or even four, but two—the good and the bad mixers, and the former, lucky creatures, seem to have all the virtues, as well, it is implied, as the gift of being able to transmit them to their children.

Now I believe the favourable way he contrasts the gregarious, slap-happy "good laughers" of North America with grim-faced totalitarians elsewhere is neither foolish nor merely self-complacent; with Anglo-Saxon vulgarity goes a love of life which immunizes those that have it from the contagion of mass-suicidal manias. This is not absolutely so, as we know for instance from the waves of hysteria following the death of film actors like Valentino and, recently, James Dean. But American suggestibility responds with overwhelming willingness to what life has to offer. The questions are, do not national dispositions at any time owe much to nurture, and are we to believe that good mixing—with all its ingredients—is commonly inherited?

The grandfathers of many Nazi S-S men must have been embodiments of *Gemüthlichkeit*, old fellows with walrus moustaches content with their beer and meerschaum pipes. The impact of an emotional creed (in Sir Charles Darwin's sense of this word) brought out a disposition in the Germans which only a few people—of whom the poet Heine was one—suspected was in them. And would those meerschaum-pipe-smokers have believed that the grandchildren of the gaberdined Jews shuffling in their local ghetto were going to turn into the farmers and fighters of a new Israel? Dr. La Rue would have been safer, or so it appears to me, to keep to the concept of temperament, rather than to have enlarged as he has done

on bundles of qualities labelled "disposition." In a family of ten children you can get all the temperaments; disposition in Dr. La Rue's sense is partly an effect of environment—but at least he reminds us that while innate qualities are what we are made of, it needs suitable free institutions for us to be able to make the best of ourselves.

It is brave of Dr. La Rue to say that "the most important act of society is the issuing of a marriage licence with privilege of parenthood," indeed he proclaims his belief that such a licence should sometimes be withheld for the community's sake. Eugenists on the whole think that family limitation should be voluntary. This is obviously the ideal, and a hard one it is to realize while education in such matters is rudimentary in some countries and in most countries non-existent; some governments actually ban birth-control. What will happen if population goes on increasing as it is doing now, and out-pacing resources? In 1921 the American government passed a Quota Act to reduce immigration and make it selective: they fixed ratios based on the numbers of any particular national stock resident in the United States in 1910. If the world food situation deteriorates one can imagine a World Quota Act in 2021 (or sooner) regulating the entry of babies from what Dr. La Rue calls Unbornia. What that might mean deserves a good deal of reflection.

PAUL BLOOMFIELD.

## FERTILITY

**Natality and Fertility in Mauritius, 1825-1955.** Central Statistical Office, Mauritius, 1956. Pp. 58. Mimeographed. No price stated.

THIS short neostyled report, copiously illustrated with charts and tables, presents and comments on the whole of the available birth statistics of Mauritius. The data are interesting for two main reasons: first, for the picture they present of the history of the island; secondly, for the vivid illustration they give of the modern problem of resources in a